

CLAIMS

1. A teleconferencing system comprising:

- at least one telecommunication system;

- at least a first and a second subscriber terminal connected to said communication system;

- an electronic computing means connected to said at least one telecommunication system, and

- a means for providing an availability signal associated with each of said first and second subscriber terminal,

said electronic computing means being provided with a conference initiating program, said availability signal being accessible to said electronic computing means, said telecommunication system being capable of cooperating with said conference initiating program for initiating a conference between said subscriber terminals, and said conference initiating program being designed:

to process availability signals of a requesting terminal, and of any and all requested terminals, whenever a conference call is requested by any of said subscriber terminals; and

to initiate a conference call as soon as said availability signals indicate availability of said requesting terminal and of said requested terminals.

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2. The system of claim 1, comprising a plurality of telecommunication systems and a multiplicity of subscriber terminals.

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3. The system of claim 2, wherein said terminals are connected to different telecommunication systems and wherein said conference initiating program is designed to:
- process availability signals of a requesting terminal and of any and all requested

1 terminals whenever a conference call is requested by any of said subscriber terminals; and
2 - to initiate a conference call as soon as said availability signals indicate availability
3 of said requesting terminal and of said requested terminals,
4 said requesting terminal and said requested terminals being connected to the same
5 telecommunication system.

6 4. The system of claim 1, comprising a gateway between any two telecommunication
7 systems for mutual interconnection, and wherein said subscriber terminals are connected
8 to different but inter-operable telecommunication systems.

9 5. The system of claim 4, wherein said conference initiating program is designed to:
10 - process availability signals of a requesting terminal, and of any and all requested
11 terminals, whenever a conference call is requested by any of said subscriber terminals; and
12 - to initiate a conference call as soon as said availability signals indicate availability
13 of said requesting terminal and of said requested terminals,

14 said requesting terminal and said requested terminals being connected to
15 telecommunication systems that are connected by said gateway.

16 6. A teleconferencing method for use in at least one telecommunication system connected
17 with at least a first and a second subscriber terminal; said at least one telecommunication
18 system being connected to an electronic computing means provided with a conference
19 initiating program; each of said subscriber terminals being associated with an availability
20 signal; wherein a conference call initiated by one of said first and said second subscriber
21 terminal is relayed to any other subscriber terminal as soon as said availability signal
22 indicates availability of any and all of said subscriber terminals.

23 7. The method of claim 6, for use in a plurality of telecommunication systems and with a
24 multiplicity of subscriber terminals wherein at least one of said telecommunication systems

- 1 is capable of transmitting data streams of differing media, e.g. sound and video.
- 2 8. A conference initiating program for use in a teleconferencing system comprising:
- 3 - at least one telecommunication system;
- 4 - at least a first and a second subscriber terminal connected to said system;
- 5 - an electronic computing means connected to said at least one telecommunication system;
- 6 said electronic computing means being provided with said conference initiating
- 7 program;
- 8 - an means for providing an availability signal associated with each of said first and said
- 9 second subscriber terminal;
- 10 said availability signal being accessible to said electronic computing means;
- 11 said conference initiating program being accessible to said subscriber terminals
- 12 and being designed:
- 13 to process availability signals of a requesting terminal, and of any and all
- 14 requested terminals whenever a conference call is requested by any of said
- 15 subscriber terminals; and
- 16 to initiated a conference call as soon as said availability signals indicate
- 17 availability of said requesting terminal and of said requested terminals.
- 18 9. The program of claim 8, said program being designed for accessibility to a plurality of
- 19 differing telecommunication systems and a multiplicity of subscriber terminals wherein at
- 20 least one of said telecommunication systems is capable of transmitting data streams of
- 21 differing media, e.g. sound and video.
- 22 10. An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium having computer
- 23 readable program code means embodied therein for causing teleconferencing, the
- 24 computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising
- 25 computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the steps of
- 26 claim 6.